

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4855

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1747

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA: "DOSSIER REMAINS OPEN"

1. SUMMARY: IN WAKE OAU SESSION, ALGERIAN/POLISARIO IMMEDIATE FUTURE STRATEGY FOR SAHARA APPEARS SET: ALGERIANS PUSHING SAHRAOUI CAUSE DIPLOMATICALLY IN INTERNATIONAL ARENAS WHILE POLISARIO KEEPS UP DRUM BEAT OF ATTRITION WARFARE TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY OF ALGERIAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

2. DIPLOMATIC: ALGERIA/POLISARIO SUCCESS AT OAU CONTINUES TO DOMINATE PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS. IN JULY 8 PRESS CONFERENCE POLISARIO MINISTER OF INFORMATION OULD SALEK CLAIMED TOTAL SUPPORT OF 32 OAU MEMBERS; HE COUNTED 29 WHO VOTED FOR BENIN RESOLUTION IN MINISTERIAL PLUS THREE ABSENTEES WHO LATER EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR BENIN RESOLUTION (LESOTHO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, SEYCHELLES). POINTING OUT THAT THIRTY-SEVEN COUNTRIES VOTED FOR PROPOSAL SPECIAL SUMMIT, SALEK NOTED THAT NOW MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF OAU HAS LINED UP WITH SAHRAOUI CAUSE. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF POLIARIO MET 6 JULY AND
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STRESSED THAT AFTER OAU SESSION SAHRAOUI PEOPLE

"MORE THAN EVER DETERMINED REPEL FORCES OF INVASION AND AGGRESSION".

3. OAU SHRUGGING OFF MAURITANIAN CRITICISM OF ALGERIAN "AGGRESSION", ALGERIAN SUCCESS IN MINISTERIAL IN GETTING BENIN RESOLUTION ADOPTED AND IN COMING AWAY FROM SUMMIT WITH PROMISE OF SPECIAL SUMMIT ON WESTERN SAHARA IN WHICH SAHRAOUI WILL PARTICIPATE BEING CITED LOCALLY AS DEMONSTRATING ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT, DESPITE MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN CLAIMS, "DOSSIER IS STILL OPEN".

4. FOR OBSERVERS LIKE US WHO HAVE BEEN REMARKING ON APPARENT DECLINE OF ALGERIAN INFLUENCE IN INTERNATIONAL CIRCLES, PORT LOUIS SHOWED THAT, WHEN STIRRED, ALGERIANS -- AND ESPECIALLY BOUTEFLEKA -- STILL SWING WEIGHT. DOUBTS EXPRESSED BY ALGERIAN EMBOFF IN RABAT (RABAT 3647) THAT SUMMIT WOULD TAKE PLACE PROBABLY SHARED HERE. KEY FOR ALGERIANS/POLIARIO AT THIS JUNCTURE IS THAT PORT LOUIS REPRESENTED FIRST CKEAR INTERNATIONAL VICTORY, VEN IF, AS ALGERIAN PRESS SNEERINGLY COMMENTS, SENEGAL, IN "PATERNALISTIC TONE", SUCCEEDED IN MAKING SUMMIT "SWALLOW" IDEA OF SPECIAL SUMMIT IN ORDER LIMIT DAMAGE FROM DEFECTION BY "KING AND HIS MAURITANIAN VASSAL".

5. MILITARY: FLOOD OF POLISARIO MILITARY COMMUNIQUE (FBIS CARRIES MOST) SUGGESTS THAT SAHRAOUI DETERMINED TO KEEP UP IMPRESSION OF CONTINUING ACTIVE WAR OF SUBVERSION IN SAHARA. NOUAKCHOTT RAID, WHILE COSTLY TO POLISARIO, DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE LESSENED THEIR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE MILITARY ACTIONS.

6. ON "NORTHERN FRONT" COMMUNIQUE LIST TARGETS AS TANTAN (WHERE TWO T-6S SHOT DOWN AND 17 KILLED), AMGALA, ZAG, BOUCRAA (SEVERAL TIMES), AKKA, TARFAYA, HAGOUNIA, JDERIA, AMAGHID, ABETTIH, EL AYOUN (SEVERAL TIMES), MAHBES, LEMSID, SMARA, M'SIED. ON "SOUTHERN FRONT" COMMUNIQUE FOCUSES ON BATTLES
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AT BIR MAGHREIN (WHERE C-130 SHOT DOWN).

7. GOA PRESS JULY 12 HIGHLIGHTS POLIARIO COMMUNIQUE ON JULY 4 AMBUSH NEAR TINGHIRT IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO WHICH ALLEGEDLY RESULTED IN 56 MOROCCAN KIA, 23 MOROCCAN PRISONERS AND CAPTURE OF NUMEROUS PIECES OF EQUIPMENT. FBIS 3 JULY REPORTS POLISARIO CLAIMS OF SUCCESS AGAINST TARGETS IN MAURITANIA, ESPECIALLY TICHIT. MOROCCAN AND

MAURITANIAN TARGETS -- AS OPPOSED TO TARGETS IN
SAHARA ITSELF -- INCREASINGLY APPEARING IN
POLIARIO COMMUNIQUEES.

8. WHAT NEXT? DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS AT BADLY-SPLIT AND
POORLY ATTENDED OAU SESSION NO GUARANTEE OF CONTINUED
SUCCESS. NOUAKCHOTT RAID COSTLY FOR POLISARIO AND
RESULTS PRESUMABLY DID NOT ENCOURAGE REPETITION.

9. NONETHELESS, ALGERIAN COMMITMENT OF BOUTEFLIKA
TO PORT LOUIS AND HIS DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS, SPLASH
MADE BY POLISARIO'S NOUAKCHOTT RAID, CONTINUED ACTION
IN THE SAHARA AND WHAT APPEARS TO BE STEPPED UP
POLISARIO ACTION AGAINST MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN TARGES
SUGGEST THAT ALGERIANS AND SAHRAOUI ARE LIKELY TO
CONTINUE THEIR DIPLOMATIC/MILITARY STRUGGLE.

10. WHATEVER HAPPENS TO IDEA OF SPECIAL OAU SUMMIT
ON SAHARA, NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT IN COLOMBO LIKELY TO
BE NEXT DIPLOMATIC BACKGROUND. IN FALL US LIKELY ONCE
AGAIN TO BE FACED AT UN WITH ANOTHER PAIR OF COMPETING
RESOLUTIONS. IN ADDITION, CONTINUED MILITARY ACTION WILL
INCREASE REGIONAL TENSIONS AND POSSIBILITIES WE WILL BE

ASKED FOR INCREASED SUPPORT, AS KOCHMAN CALL ON ASST. SEC.
SCHAUFLE SUGGESTS (STATE 168804).PARKER

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